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Book of Ramblings

by
Myra Williams Jarrell









"The Casual Visitor"

Book of Ramblings

Bits of Homely Philosophy
Written For My Friends,
The Public

By
Myra Williams Jarrell

BOOK OF RAMBLINGS

Dedication

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THIS little book is lovingly dedicated to those who have rambled with me in the Garden of Memory, and gathered a few posies to put between the covers of an old book; those who have stepped with me into the Kitchen of Life, where dwell the lowly ones of the earth; those who have danced with me upon the Glades of Childhood, and glimpsed the joy of imperishable youth,

MY READERS.



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W.B. Jones, Jr. 1-14.

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BY ALBERT T. REID

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That Man of One

HE was just a little boy when you first knew him. Just a little, towsly-headed, freckle-faced, snub-nosed boy. There probably were patches on his pants, and his galluses didn't join, but you never noticed it. Then, as now, love was blind, and that blessed blindness which has ever been a boon to women, concealed his defects. He whispered behind his hand when the teacher was looking the other way, and drew funny pictures on his slate. Likely as not, it was a caricature of you, with hair ribbon adorning the end of your pigtail, out of all proportion to the few hairs it contained. Maybe, too, he drew you cross-eyed, and slant-mouthed. Undoubtedly he did, for everything looked funny to his sense. And everything he did, even the cross eyes and slant mouth; yes, even the face he made at you, to convince Johnny Jones that he felt only contempt for a Mere Girl, seemed funny to you then. Something within you responded to something within him. The same something which caused him to turn handsprings as he passed you on the road going home from school, looking at you all the time out of the corner of his eye to see if his prowess was making the impression he intended it should upon your youthful mind.

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But he did not remain long a trowsly-haired boy with the one freckle which spread over his entire face, with patches on pants and unstrung galluses. When next he dawned upon your notice he was an athletic High School boy, training for football, with long hair, wide trousers and clothes generally hung with careful carelessness. He would not learn to dance, and that was a cross to you, for dancing had become a passion by that time, and you found your feet and heart tripping in time to every harmonious sound of music. Still it was a satisfaction to you that his ears were clean, and that he was willing to chat with you lightly about team work, and the studies that you had in common. Then, too, he treated you to soda water at the corner drug store, on rare and treasured occasions. He usually was very red in the face at such times, and showed an uncomfortable tendency to dodge when any of his acquaintances came into the store. But you didn't mind—oh, dear, no! You fluffed your hair and bit your lips to show your dimples, and crooked your little finger as you drank, to show that you were familiar with all the little elegances of polite society, and felt, all at once, horribly grown up.



And then he changed again! He had big mournful eyes with soulful expression. He

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played the mandolin and chanted ballads of sweet passion to you in a tuneless little voice. He satisfied that period of your development which made of life such a serious, sad thing. He knew instinctively that you carried a burden far too heavy for your slender shoulders. You did not need to tell him that you were unappreciated in your home circle. That Father was engrossed in business, and did not realize his rare privilege in rearing a genius. That Mother was too busy in looking after the cares of the household to sympathize wholly with your *ad astra per aspera* temperament. That Brother Tom was rough and uncouth, and openly ridiculed your choicest sentiments. That Sister Ann wasted no time watching from the housetops in your interests, but mimicked your refined manners in the privacy of the family; that the family cruelly found her vulgarity amusing. He was the only person in the whole world who understood you. And you adored him for it! You adored the length of his eyelashes, and the delicate effeminacy of his face. His mouth, with its curved red lines, was a poem to you—a poem of which you never tired. That is, not for some time.



After a while you began to find a sameness in his voice, in his expression of sympathetic, soulful, high-class passion. Disillusion fol-

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lowed the discovery of monotony, and for a few years you did not believe in yourself, or your capacity for constant love. You scoffed at the tender passion, and were cold and untouched by the love offered you by other men.



And then he came back to you—this composite man of yours. You never noticed the color of his eyes, nor the length of his hair. You did not know whether his mind ran in Ibsenesque channels or was commercial. You knew only that it was he. You listened in a trance to his avowal of love. You never questioned him. You never looked behind. Indeed, you saw only the precious present, and the long vista of dreams stretching out ahead, indefinite, but unspeakably sweet with promise. You look back even now upon that period and you are thrilled by its remembrance!



And then the Man of One changes. The lover is merged in the husband. There may at times be lacking the romance, which marked his passage across your life from that first little tow-headed love, who likely as not delivers groceries at your back door now—but something has taken the place of that romance, something deeper, finer, more substantial.

You have, with that man of yours, waited in breathless anxiety beside a little crib; in

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voiceless agony watched a little life almost flicker out—to be wafted back to you like a breath from Heaven. And the union of your two souls at that moment—your soul and the soul of that man of yours—who can comprehend save the One Mind which knows everything!

Shadows and sunshine alike have softly enveloped the dwelling place of love, but through it all, the Man of One has loomed big, vital, instinct with life. He has changed with the changing years. Care and responsibility, and maybe sorrow, have deepened the lines on cheek and forehead, and touched his hair with silver. His form has taken on added weight and corpulence—proof of your material care of the body—but the Man himself is essentially the same.

The love which must have its outlet through all the years has its center and circumference now in the Man, the husband.

Life with that Man of One seems very real and good—a something to cling to—a something to cling to through all the years to come, until, with the feeling of being no longer needed here, comes the desire to step over the border, you and that man of yours, hand in hand—just over the border, no farther, into that fair country which awaits you.

The Room of Long Ago

PROSPERITY came to a woman one day—it matters not how or why or whence. She was not totally unprepared for it, for she had employed most of her leisure hours building Castles in Spain.

So that, when the Call came, she knew the exact shade of the hangings to be used in each room of the beautiful house she created; she had seen it all in the visions she had had—the glimpses into the future, rosy with promise.

This room, hung in soft grays and old blues, with its mahogany furniture, she had long enjoyed in thought; that one, with the tints of the autumn on wall and floor, should be furnished in golden oak. The sun parlor, with the cretonne hangings, and the old ivy clinging to the inner walls, reaching ever a little higher, should have deep, restful chairs of green wicker. There should stand her work basket, of the same design — here, a wicker table strewn with magazines and a few favorite books.

In this retreat should tea be served, brought in by a deft servant on a tea cart of the green wicker. Here, over the teacups, should a few choice and congenial spirits chat lightly of the Spiritual Uplift, the Intellectual Output, and the Philosophical Intake.

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When she came to dispose of the furnishings—possessions that had cluttered the old house—the woman paused. And that part of her that was sentimental refused to part with some of the dear old things that had been so closely identified with her past, its struggles, its bitterness, its tears, its love, and its richness of compensation.

So the other woman—the prosperous, newly rich, the one to whom had come that beneficence of spirit commonly associated with wealth—felt that she could afford to indulge the sentimental caprice that had made it pain to part with the old.

One room, therefore, in the new house, was consecrated to the preservation of such old possessions as were dearest. She called it, to herself, the Room of Long Ago.



At first, so exhilarating was the influence of the new-found wealth, so exquisite and artistic and wholly harmonious were the new rooms in their lovely dressing, she paid small heed to the Room of Long Ago.

But one day—when an unlovely suspicion had entered her mind—the suspicion, unfounded, surely!—that her money was responsible for her sudden popularity; one day when her world seemed to have gone criss-cross—not she, but the world; when the lovely

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new possessions seemed to hold themselves coldly aloof from her, she fled from them, from her world, and shut herself into the Room of Long Ago.

She sank into the depths of an old Morris chair of near-mahogany, and velour cushions that had faded in the sunlight of many years.

How well she remembered the day they had bought it! She smiled at the recollection—smiled through the tears in her eyes. Her John had put in a few extra hours working, had received extra money for his services, and had bought it to surprise her. When she came down stairs for the first time after the baby came, John had gently put her down into its soft, comfortable depths, and placed the little, warm, cuddly form of her first-born in her arms. He was out in the world now, carving out his own niche in the world—and the arms which had held him were empty!

The rug on the floor of the Room of Long Ago—the dear faded old rug! On it had John played horse with little John, the youngster clinging to him, shrieking with mingled joy and terror, as the fiery steed galloped over the floor.

On the wall were pictures of big John and little John—yes, of herself, too—crude pictures, many of them, but so smiling and happy. The one of John with the baby in his arms

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might not be a work of art, such as she had in her downstairs drawing room, but to her, the pride and joy in John's face, and the roguish expression of little John's made it the most beautiful thing in the world.

Her old desk—would she ever again sit there and write little nonsensical rhymes, in the hope that some publisher might see in them buds of promise!

And the old scratched center table—with the reading lamp—how many evenings had she and John sat, one on each side, he with his paper and she with a book—or a bit of white needle work—too precious for words!

Here, too, in after years, had little John labored with fractions and decimals; here, also, were the initials he had carved on the then smooth surface of the table, and for doing which she had punished him—as if it mattered! Her fingers touched lovingly the letters, and she bit her lips to keep back the tears.

The little china dog on the mantle John had bought the day that little John had cut his first tooth. A smile chased away the tears as she recalled how she and John had exclaimed over and admired the tiny pearl.

Over in one corner of the room stood an old piano, battered and scratched and slightly out of tune—the one she had practiced her scales upon in her girlhood home. She went

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over and sat down upon the old-fashioned stool. She touched the keys, and they gave out a plaintive sound.

Then her fingers wandered, as her mind went back to those early days of their struggle with poverty, into the old songs that she and her John had sung together during the tender days of courtship, and the beautiful days of their young wedded life.

Thin, but unspeakably sweet, like a voice from the past, the notes spoke to her, and they brought to her the message of peace she had sought.



When her hour was ended—the little hour she had allowed herself from the glitter of the present—she left the Room of Long Ago. On the threshold she paused. Her eyes took in every detail, from the plain ruffled muslin curtains at the windows, and the homely geranium blooming in the sunshine, to the old-timey wall paper, and the faded rug. Her eyes traveled slowly from object to object, dwelling upon each one lovingly, and she whispered, “Always I have you to come back to, dear Room of Long Ago.”

A Grouch of Twenty Years

SHE was twenty and she had a Grouch. She was young and pretty with life all before her—yet she had a Grouch. An ugly, wicked old thing he was, and he touched her and smoothed out the dimples of laughter, and recast the mould of her fresh young lips, so that they drooped at the corners, instead of exercising Youth's prerogative, and curving upward. Over her pretty, unusually merry eyes, he drew a somber veil which dimmed their light.

For this calumny — this lie which he put upon her—this disfiguring change from youthful beauty and sweetness to dourness and sourness — she should have dismissed him from her presence. But, instead, she nursed her ugly, old Grouch, and petted him, and kept him by her all of one sweet summer day—thereby losing that one precious, never-to-be-regained period.

No young girl with her first suitor was ever more proud than this twenty-year-old girl was of her Grouch.

"Come out and play," called her young companions. "We are going to take a lunch and climb to the top of Mount Wilson."

She might have gone, for when she was normal she liked to walk, and she enjoyed all

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the things which healthy young blood suggests.

"You'll not go," insisted her guest, the Grouch. "Let them go, and have a good time without you. You stay here with me."

So she listened to him, and the gay young voices died away in the distance. And then, paradoxically, because her Grouch had meddled and cheated her of her good time, she clung more closely to him than ever, and she blamed her friends, and everybody in the whole world because she was miserable—except just herself and the Grouch.



Once she looked out of her window. She saw the wonderful lights and shadows on the plains, and she knew that the pines of her beloved mountains offered inviting shade. The Peak was clean-cut and glowed with pinkish splendor, close up against the skyline, while down in the valley below some fleecy white clouds drifted lazily. The whole landscape beckoned to her and whispered, "Come and sketch me."

She glanced longingly toward sketch book, and palette, and other paraphernalia, for the artist was strong in her. But the Grouch, whom for the moment she had forgotten, again claimed her, and said grudgingly, "Don't go. You would forget all about me, out there

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in the blessed sunshine, with the shadow of the pines all about you, and the Peak, with its majesty and stillness guarding the picture you would make. Stay here in this stuffy room. And don't look out of the window again—for it's dangerous to me."



So she obeyed the behest of her ugly, ridiculous old Grouch. Her having him at all was ridiculous—for what concord hath a Grouch and Twenty Years?

She shut out the sunshine and laughter and beauty and joy and gave herself up wholly to the entertainment of the ugly, old Grouch. The day wore on—the precious day which had begun so auspiciously—the day which had begun just for her—to do with as she chose—to make of benefit or to waste. And the only use she made of it was to shut herself up with a Grouch.

At eventide, when the gay company of which she was one had gathered about the wide fireplace, and were toasting marshmallows and telling stories, she wearied of her Grouch. She had not found him very good company through her lost day.

Her lusty youth finally wrestled with and downed him. Then she threw him out of the window and laughed as she saw him vanish

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like a puff of smoke—for after all, he was no more than that.

The laugh brought the dimples back to her cheeks, and the laughter to her eyes. All the ugly lines of ill temper that the Grouch had marked on her face, smoothed themselves out and she was Twenty Years, minus a Grouch—Twenty Years—magical time of Youth!

When she joined her companions, she became the merriest one in the bunch—all the more merry because she had lost so much time.

“What was the matter with you today?” someone asked. “How did you come to have a Grouch?”

She puckered her pretty brows in thought a moment, and then laughed. “To save my soul I don’t remember,” she said.



Thus it usually is, when a Grouch takes up his (note the masculine gender) abode with any of us. We know not whence he came or why, or wherefore. We can give no satisfactory explanation as to our reason for admitting him into our consciousness.

He is a sly, invidious, sneaking intruder who should be banished from civilized society. But he gets in some way. He has a card of entrance into the most select set. It cannot be his appearance which entitles him to the card,

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nor can it be his genealogy, for he can claim no higher personages for his family tree than Ill Temper, and Envy, and Jealousy.

We know him for what he is. We know him to be the most uglifying guest we can admit, for beauty and he do not affiliate. We know that in time he is going to rob us of whatever of grace or loveliness we may have been endowed with, and that he is going to drive our friends away from us.

And yet we bid him welcome. We take the covering from the furniture, and we ransack the larder of our thought for its choicest possessions for his consumption.

And he is very, very greedy. He gobbles up everything in the household worth having or saving. We may have some little tid-bit of thought we are treasuring—something we value too highly to have out where anyone can see it—something we keep in the farthest corner of the cupboard of our mentality, to be taken out in private and rejoiced over. But nothing is sacred to the Grouch. He seeks out the treasures of forbidden places—and consumes them.



A Grouch and Twenty Years! An anachronism, surely! We may smile in amusement at it—and welcome back the dimples, which never remain long away, while the heart is young.

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But a Grouch and Forty, Fifty, or Sixty! Heaven save us from the contemplation!

Yet there isn't such a great stretch as one might imagine, between Twenty, and Forty, or Fifty, or Sixty.

And the Grouch who gains entrance to the consciousness of Twenty—how he chortles with glee—for he knows that by his touch he can convert Twenty into Forty. And he knows that if Twenty Years opens the door and lets him in—he will have lodgement, off and on—through all the years—till Twenty Years have merged into Forty and Fifty and Sixty—and the face of Twenty Years has become seared and scarred by the fires of ill humor he has kindled.



BUT—sometimes a blessed word—there is one virtue a Grouch possesses—and that is timidity. He is easily discouraged. He will knock at your door—like Opportunity. And, like Opportunity—though Ingalls' beautiful poem proclaims otherwise—he will come back and knock again.

He will even peer in through the closed shutters of your house, through which he can see the light streaming, to see if you are at home—for he's a sneaking, prying fellow.

But if he continues to knock, and you do not open, he will give a sigh of renunciation,

and pass on. Heed this, dear, sweet, joyous Twenty Years—and let your blinds be drawn and your door tightly closed—and keep your dimples and your sunshine and the merry light in your eyes through all the years to come.

Married People's Jokes

TWO bright and interesting young women were discussing Married People's Jokes in my hearing, not long ago, in no uncertain tones. I asked them to enumerate some, to see if "Among those present" were those of my childhood recollection. I found that they were, and after I was left alone, they passed in mental review before me, those Married People's Jokes, in squads and batallions.

Some there were, moss-grown and gray, but still time-honored. Some had an assumption of jauntiness, some showed the marks of age. Some there were that were cruel, some sensual and vulgar, many that were vapid, more that were meaningless.

In all stages of preservation and decay, they passed before me. Some made no effort to conceal their years, even glorying in the fact that they had survived more fitting ones. Some there were, with haggard faces, some

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who strove with hair dye and wrinkle removers to keep up an appearance of youth.

Some were active, some lagged behind, and some there were who stepped to one side, to let the stragglers pass. And the road they took led to the place where Love lies buried—not, perhaps, the whole body of Love, but the fair and beautiful heart of it, while there remains but the outer garment, the semblance of what has been.

One Joke there is, the oldest born, who had his birth in the Garden of Eden, and who has been parading himself ever since. It is the ancient one, that SHE did the Proposing. He is so old—so very old, and toothless, that he can no longer wound.

Then the one about He being Her Last Chance. He, too, is beginning to feel his age, and to wonder if, after all his years of service, he may not soon retire.

I saw the twin Jokes, about His Next, and Her Next, capering as actively as though they, too, had found the Fountain of Perennial Youth. There was one so gaily caparisoned, so lively, that at first glance I took her for a new one, and might have continued so thinking, had I not heard the other Jokes whispering among themselves. One said: "She puts on so much war paint that she fools some people. But I remember that when I was a mere in-

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fant, she was going about with her skirts down, and her hair up." Then, on closer inspection, I saw that the Joke under discussion was that antediluvian one about the things He would do, when She went "To the Country, Hooray, Hooray!"

One little fellow I saw—he looked so small, so harmless—yet I believe he is the most dangerous Joke of all. He was born of the modern custom of swapping wives and husbands at theaters and balls. He might more properly be called an Innuendo than a Joke. His older brother used to be, not a Joke, but a Tragedy, and he was never mentioned in the families in which he dwelt—only by the neighbors, and then in whispers, that the children might not hear.

This small joke, this Innuendo—about Her Husband's Case with Her Dearest Friend—is very proud of his position in society, and boastfully proclaims that he belongs exclusively to the Smart Set. For in circles less smart, men and women who are wedded still plod along in the good old-fashioned way, each woman with her own instead of her friend's husband.

There are so many of these Jokes, alas, that it is impossible to enumerate them all. But you know them when they happen along. And, knowing them, you realize that each one

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carries a poisonous dart, aimed at the heart of Love.

It is a wonder that any girl or young man can dare to venture into matrimony when on all sides they hear these Married People's Jokes. Their salvation lies in the fact that they believe themselves to be immune from them. And so they will be, if they are well mated, and if they both sincerely try to do their part toward cementing the ideal relationship they have pictured, during the betrothal stage.

Married People's Jokes, like tramps, leave their chalk-mark on the gate of the household. And happy that couple upon whose gate is written, that all Jokes that run may read: "This is no place for Jokes. You would starve to death for lack of sustenance here. Go on to the next place, where may be found food and lodgement."

The Fear of the Casual Visitor

THE Great Fear of Woman, is for the Casual Visitor. Everything else sinks into obscurity, beside that haunting Fear, the Thing which pursues her relentlessly throughout her length of days. She takes it with her to bed, and she awakens to find it sitting on her chest grinning at her, when the dawn of



"The Casual Visitor"

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a new day breaks. The Fear of the Casual Visitor!



How many lives it has all but wrecked. How much domestic infelicity it is responsible for. It drives Woman, like a galley slave, through the sweet smelling days of Spring, on through the torridity of the summer months—past the autumn, with its luring tints on the foliage, on into the short, dark days of winter, until one year is merged into another year and yet another.

Then when the hands are still, and the heart at rest from earthly worries, and not till then, is Woman free from the Great Fear which took up its abode with her when she assumed the responsibility of housekeeping.



“Come and rest a while on the porch and feast on this beautiful panorama of green and gold and violet, which is spread out all over the landscape—just for you—for you,” urges Woman’s other self, the Play-Lady, she of the Dreams, who is always trying to hitch her wagon to a star—what does SHE know of the Fear?

She has no cognizance of the Casual Visitor, who is liable to drop in at any time and find the beds unmade, and the dishes unwashed.

“Oh no,” Woman hastily answers with a

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sigh of renunciation, turning her back squarely upon her tempter, "Oh, no, I have no time to look at the view. I must get my house all in order. Some One might come."

She is afraid of the Casual Visitor! But the Play Lady, she of the Dreams, is strangely persistent, especially when she is aided and abetted by a glimpse of green pastures, and distant hills, and flecks of clouds which in themselves, furnish entertainment for hours upon hours for imaginative temperaments.

"Steal a little time," whispers the Play Lady, she of the Dreams, "just sit still a wee bit, and let the Silence tell you all the lovely things it has to tell, if you will but listen."

"But I can't," stubbornly reasserts that practical, workaday woman, thinking of the thing which never leaves her, the Great Fear.



And so she is driven, day in and day out, deadening as far as she is able, that Other Part of her, that shiftless, lazy, unpractical Play Lady, SHE of the Dreams.

But there are days—oh, such tedious, work laden days—when she knows that a little way down the road, the golden rod is blooming for her, just waiting for her to come and pick armsful of it, to make her house riotous with its joyous color. Days when she can close her eyes and see the red of the sumach, and the

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tawny tints of the maples, in the woods just a little way off—such a little way. She knows that the water is flowing sleepily under the old stone bridge, with the overhanging branches of wild grapes, joining in the chorus of invitations that are clamorously backing up the Play Lady, She of the Dreams, who insistently urges a cessation of duties—duties which are constantly being pushed to the foreground by the Fear.



“Come out into the woods with a good book,” the Play Lady whispers. “It’s a fine day for reading and assimilating.”

“And it’s a fine day for baking, so I’m going to bake a cake.”

“But why?” persists that flighty creature, the Play Lady, who is strangely thick skinned, and will not stay put, but perpetually tries to stick her nose into the Everyday woman’s business, forsooth!

“Some one might come, and I wouldn’t have a thing in the house to eat.”

“Some one, Some one, pooh,” scoffs the Play Lady, who has been badly brought up, and never taught the value of Common place Things—“Feed ’em bread and butter and let ’em look at the view.”

“I can’t,” pleads the Woman, longing to yield. For even into the Everyday Woman’s

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consciousness sleeps the love of nature. "Even if I didn't have to bake a cake, the back cellar steps have to be scrubbed."

"Why?" Did you ever hear of any one so silly as that Play Lady with her eternal "Why, why?" "You do not think the Some One you have been expecting every day for twenty years, is going down to examine the back cellar steps, do you?"



But it's all of no use. The Play Lady, She of the Dreams, thinks she is pretty important. But she does not loom up big against the horizon like the Great Fear, the Fear of the Casual Visitor. And perhaps some day—it's a sad thing to contemplate—but some day maybe, that gay, merry, beauty loving Part of Woman, the Play Lady, She of the Dreams will become less insistent, and will finally be crushed into silence by the Juggernaut which dominates the days of the Everyday Woman. Her voice will be stilled and there will then be no rival to the Great Fear, which will enjoy its Reign of Terror, without interruption by the poor, little, well-meaning, but useless Play Lady, She of the Dreams.

The Haunted House

THEY say that the house is haunted, the superstitious folk in the village mountain retreat where you spent so much of your girlhood, your early womanhood, and your young motherhood. And so it is to you, haunted with sweet memories of long gone pleasures, of joyous reunions with loved ones, of merriment and laughter, and of tender associations.

It stands aloof from the village, in, but not of it—the dear old house of hallowed recollections. And perhaps, because it stands a lonely sentinel upon the Mountain of Bye-gone Days, the village thinks it is queer, and haughty, and—different, somehow. And because the village cannot grasp the subtle something that separates it from the village, pronounces the curse upon it, and says it is a haunted house.



You sit on its wide, hospitable porch, that one time rang with the laughter of a happy crowd, and your memory goes back to the first time you entered this haunted house. NOW, the boards of the porch are worn—worn with the passing of many feet, the dancing feet of the thoughtless young, the romping feet of the grandchildren, and the steady feet of the elders, as they moved about.

Now, the haunted house needs a coat of

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paint, and it presents a forlorn exterior to the curious ones who climb the hill to gaze askance at a haunted house where people dare to live.



But THEN—ah, then it was a gay, irresponsible young thing, bright with new paint, young and untried, without a past, with its history still to be made, its future undetermined.

Now it has lived. It has looked on gayety and youth and happiness, and it has looked on love grown mellow with the years. It has seen festivity and joy. It has witnessed grief unspeakable.

Then, when you came, in the pride of your young girlhood into the house that they now call haunted, the one who had always done his utmost to indulge you, led you into two rooms which were to be your very own, a bedroom and a sitting room completely and daintily furnished. In the sitting room was a book case for your favorite books, and a writing desk, where you might sit and write all of the silly stuff that came into your silly young head.

And in the drawer of the desk, as if you needed one thing more to complete your happiness, was an exquisite watch set with jewels.

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That was but one day of all the days of joy that came to you in the years that followed. As you sit in the silence and loneliness of the big porch, you wonder at the love and the thought that was lavished upon you, when this haunted house, like yourself, was a gay young thing, without responsibility or history.

As you gaze, with eyes that see but dimly, through your tears, at the vast panorama of cloud and plain and mountain peak, for those who have eyes to see, you behold the porch of this haunted house, peopled, indeed, with those who have thrilled with the glory of it all.

There is one who sits with folded hands, gazing with keen appreciation at the view, saying little, but expressing much.

And the one to whom you owed these summers of ease and comfort and beauty, with his hat pulled down to shade his eyes, a cigar in his mouth, looks with the eyes of a dreamer, a poet and a visionary, upon the grandeur of the view that is peculiarly his own, because he discovered it.

The porch echoes and re-echoes to the sound of voices long since stilled—that die away into silence, as you realize you are alone.



You think of a day in your maturer years, when the young of your own household, and

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those of your brother's and sister's, have taken their places under this hospitable roof.

It is a gala day, for it marks an epoch in the lives of those two dear ones who have given you all of the pleasures in this house of haunting memories. The house has settled down into middle-aged quietude by this time. It is not so young and jaunty as of yore, and the grounds surrounding it are not so green and well kept. Yet a sweet peace has come upon it—a sense of responsibility akin to that which has enriched your own life, for it, too, is making history.

They are wearing flowers today, those two dear ones, he in his button hole and she in her hair, flowers that have been placed there by the hand of a child or a grandchild, it matters not which.

You have the flowers now—dried and wilted, in your holy of holies, with a few tear blurred letters, a lock of hair, and some old pictures.

But there were no tears on this day, for it was a joyous occasion—even the fortieth wedding anniversary of the two dear ones. There was laughter and singing and feasting, on this day that you recall, for not one loved one was absent, no break had occurred in the perfect family circle, upon that happy day.

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Before the next anniversary rolled around, the faithful old house had sagged a little with its weight of woe, for two of the circle were missing. And the wedded couple, who had aged within that year, sat with clasped hands and quivering lips, and eyes that vainly strove to pierce the veil that obstructed their view.

Futilely did cloud and plain and mountain peak assume their most marvelous tints. The two who sat on this empty porch, gazed with eyes that saw not, and hearts that comprehended not. They knew but one thing—they were bereaved.



The subdued voices of curious tourists penetrate the big porch where you sit alone with your memories. You catch the words, "Haunted House."

You smile, as you tell yourself, without fear or bravado, that you rejoice in the fact that it IS a haunted house—a house that has lived and loved and enjoyed and suffered, with those to whom it owes entire allegiance, and that it would be ungrateful indeed, for all its years of experience, were it not a haunted house.

The Art of Letter-writing

WE hear considerable complaint nowadays that the art of letterwriting is a lost art. In one sense this is true. A generation or so ago, as a glimpse through any bundle of old letters will convince, stilted even though they might be as to style, a letter contained only the precious bits of news so refreshing to the heart of the wayfarer.

Now, when Henry is away buying goods for the store and the letter from Back Home is received, he opens it with avidity, hoping that he will be able, after mastering its contents, to see the family circle, know what each one is doing and so keep in touch with them all.

It does not interest Henry to know that Mrs. Algernon Jones is going to give a bridge party, and that the Hateful Old Thing has left his Maria out. Neither, if his Maria is of a poetical turn of mind, does it matter that the apple trees are in blossom, and shedding their prodigality and fragrance all over the place.

What our Henry wants to know is: will they yield a good crop this year? And did little Sarah pass in school? And what did the butcher offer for the calf? And did the last rain fill up the cistern? And did Johnny get over the stone bruises? And have they drowned that last batch of kittens yet?

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For our Henry has a practical turn of mind, and it is the practical things that appeal to him—all of the little everyday familiar things of life are of interest to him, and he cares not at all for abstract discussions as to whether basques will be worn short or long, or that the Browning club had decided at its last meeting to take up the reading of Mary Jane Holmes' works next winter.



There comes to my mind the vision of a bright and dear friend at a distance—a friend whose life does not touch mine save through correspondence; a girlhood friend whose daily little goings and comings would be of interest, since their chronicling would serve to cement the relationship.

I know that she has two interesting children. It would be a pleasure to be made acquainted with her children through her letters. Instead, this is what she writes: "The snow is sifting down on my window pane as I write; great flakes of white, each one bearing its message of peace to me. Through the heavily laden branches of the tree which jealously guards my front walk, I catch a glimpse of the white world Beyond, and I sit and wonder what message the snow is bringing to others," etc., etc.

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Very pretty, maybe—but I put her letter down with an unsatisfied feeling. I can go to my library for literature—but my library cannot supply all the little information I would so enjoy reading about herself, her children and her life.



We are tending more and more to this display of literary ability, in our letters, and less and less to the things that our correspondents really long to know.

Now Henry is a far better correspondent than his Maria. He makes no attempt to clothe his simple news in metaphors or to have his ideas masquerade in borrowed finery. He knows what he likes to hear from Back Home, and by the same token he sends out his daily or weekly budget, as the case may be.

His Maria may be of the sentimental sort who sighs because he does not tell her on every line, of his passionate adoration of her, his longing for her and the fact that the days seem like months while he is absent from her. It would be a lie if Henry should write it for he is having a very good time in the city and has no leisure for sentiment.

He tells Maria in plain unvarnished words that he had been to Coney Island the night before. That he shot the chutes and went up in the Ferris wheel. That his dinner cost him 80

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cents, and that he bought her a perfectly good percale suit at a bargain.



Not long ago I received a letter from a dear old lady of whom I am very fond. It was written with a lead pencil and was nothing wonderful in the matter of grammatical construction or spelling. But it was right to the point. She told me just the things I wanted to know, told them simply and directly.

It was like a visit with the old lady. I sat and smiled to myself with pleasure over the letter. I was able to follow her through her sweet, quiet life for the few weeks intervening since her last letter.

I sat with her as she knitted on the shawl which was for the comfort of some one. I shared with her her simple repast. I assisted at the little task of cleaning up afterwards. Then I watched while she took her afternoon siesta, her dear old gray head leaning to one side of her chair, her glasses gently sliding down over her nose, her hands idle in her lap. And so, with a whispered "good bye and God bless you," I left her to her pleasant dreams.

Then I vainly tried to piece together the little daily occurrences in the life of my friend beyond the big range of hills—but found it a Chinese puzzle—a following of the seasons,

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one upon the other—the wonders of nature, with which we are all familiar.

I recalled that in the spring I was made aware that the birds were singing, and that the crocuses were peeping from beneath their blankets of snow. I was informed that the still, hot days of summer were upon her, with their suggestion of drowsiness—and this was followed by the knowledge that the autumn tints were on the foilage, and that the crispness of the air brought with it renewed vigor and the ambition to take up life again. But of that life—nothing!

This, then, is the secret of successful letter writing. To write as one would talk—not as one would read it from Shelley or Byron. To tell the things the correspondent wants to hear—to put in the trills and thrills if one must—but stick to the original melody through it all!

The Woman Who Had a Grievance

THE Woman who had a Grievance put a cake into the oven and slammed the door shut, for once in her life unmindful of the consequences. Then, with a sigh she began mechanically washing the bowl in which she

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had made the cake. A tear ran down her cheek and mingled with the dishwater.

Perhaps the Woman who had a Grievance was tired. Certain it is that the temperature was uncomfortably high and that three meals a day must be prepared for her family, and that the house be kept in some semblance of order regardless of the state of the weather.

However, the real cause of her disgruntlement was in a letter she had received that morning. It was one of those chatty family letters that soars here and there and touches the high places but never gets right down to vital matters.

In it she learned that Cousin Sallie had a new electric machine, and a grand set of sables; that Sister Emily was going yachting with a party of friends; that Cousin William's wife had gone abroad for a year; that the Subner-Wilseys had had a new oil well come in; that Sister Janet was building a fine new house, and that Cousin Mary had discharged her chauffeur for stealing; that the writer herself, even Cousin Amelia, was having a dreadful time because the cook had left and there were only two maids, the houseman, the gardener and the chauffeur left, and no prospect of another cook for a week!



It seemed the natural sequence of things

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for the woman who read the letter, to have a grievance. SHE had no machine, except a washing machine, and a sewing machine, both of which she worked overtime. SHE had no fine house, no yaching trips or European tours in prospect; in addition, she had not even one housemaid to assist HER, but was cook, housemaid, gardener and seamstress, combined.

Therefore—clouds had overcast the sky of the day that had begun promisingly enough. She recalled that she had felt a wave of deep joy, as the exquisite melody of a robin on her window sill had awakened her.

She had drawn in a breath of pure happiness as she had realized that Yesterday and Today had blended in perfect harmony—and she had thanked the Giver of all good who had given her the strength to labor for those that she loved.



And now the spirit of thankfulness was gone and in its place dwelt a strange irritability and sense of grievance—all because of a silly letter!

Nothing had changed since the day had begun—nothing but her mental concept of things.

The Woman who had a Grievance sat down to peel the potatoes. It was such homely

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work, she told herself bitterly—not homey, but homely. She could not imagine Cousin Amelia peeling potatoes. It was hard on the hands, too! The Woman who had a Grievance looked ruefully down at her somewhat roughened hands, with a wry smile uglifying her face. The time had been when her hands had been the envy of all her women kin.

A sudden, shrill little cry penetrated to the kitchen. It came from the front porch where the children were playing. The Woman who had a Grievance dropped the pan of potatoes and flew through the house and met her youngest born in the living room, on his way to find the consolation he sought.

It was only that he had stubbed a little bare toe, but the mother clasped him to her and sat down in a rocking chair to “rock the hurt away,” as the baby phrased it.

As she held the warm little body in her arms and kissed the tears from his cheeks and pushed the baby ringlets back from his moist brow, her mind went back to Sister Janet, before whose door a white hearse had stood one day and borne away her only child—and she wondered what Sister Janet would give to feel her baby in her arms as she held hers.



The thought surged in upon her of Cousin Sallie who had once been in love and seen the

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man she cared for wed another; and of Cousin William's wife, between whom and whose husband there was nothing in common, and who had never had a child to help her make a home; of the Subner-Wilseys, who were so rich and whose lives were so wretchedly unhappily and inharmonious that even the servants pitied them, for all their money; of Cousin Amelia, who wrangled with her adopted daughter who appreciated nothing that had been done for her.



She knew—did this Woman who thought she had a Grievance, that there wasn't a woman among 'em who would not be happier if she had a modest little home, a husband like her John, and children like hers.

When the hurt had all been rocked away and the baby had rejoined his brothers and sisters, the Woman who had thought that she had a Grievance, went thoughtfully back to her kitchen.

She took the cake from the oven, and smiled at the perfect triumph of art that met her eyes. She sat down again to the homey task—not homely, this time—of peeling potatoes.

And then, miracle of miracles, the robin that had awakened her that morning began to sing in the tree just outside her window—the same glad song that it had sung before — only

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MORE joyous, because the Woman who thought that she had a Grievance had been through her trial and had come through with the glad knowledge that God is indeed in His Heaven and that all's well with the world!

The Bad Little Girl

SHE was such a little thing—such a pretty, bewitching little thing—that it seemed impossible that she could have incurred the disapproval of any one. And besides she had only been here four short years—such incredibly short years to those who loved her, while the person who had disapproved of her was a great, big, grown-up woman, a woman old enough to be her grandmother.

This woman had said she was a bad little girl, and that she was not to cross the boundary line that divided the houses, any more. The bad little girl may have flashed her big dark eyes, and she may have tossed her pretty head, as proof of her indifference, but she crept into the arms of the mother whose heart had been wounded through and through by the big woman's attitude toward her baby, and the baby lips framed the words, "Muddie, don't she LOVE me any more?"



Edw. Reis

"The Bad Little Girl"

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The big woman who had said the bitter things about the bad little girl, called herself a good Christian, and belonged to a church. Perhaps, when she had been a little girl, some forty years ago, she may have snapped her eyes and tossed her head, and slapped a comrade or taken something away from another—which charges were the blackest ones she could find to make against the bad little girl.

Perhaps, too, some woman whose child she had bullied a little, as she thought the bad little girl had bullied hers, may have called HER a bad little girl, and have made dire predictions concerning the ultimate end of her career.

I wonder, if such was the case—if the wonderment that there should be aught but love in this world she had known for so short a time, had trembled in her voice, as she asked, “Muddie, don’t she LOVE me any more?”



The bad little girl is like most people, even those who have been on earth longer, she gives as she receives. When a big, grown-up woman treats the bad little girl as if she really were a bad little girl,—then the bad little girl snaps her eyes, and stamps her foot, and maybe, makes a face and does as well as she can in her babyish innocence, to deserve the odium.

On the other hand, when one gives love to the bad little girl, her dark eyes become lumin-

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ous and melting, her red lips curve upward,—the bewitching dimple in her cheek deepens, and she simply radiates love from every pore. When she is treated with fairness and kindness, she is like the little boy of Eugene Field's conception, she says "Yes'm to the ladies, and yessir to the men,"—and is altogether adorable.



The bad little girl had been a-jaunting. On the car coming home she had fallen asleep, her head resting against her mother's shoulder. Her father had lifted her and carried her in his arms from the car. They passed the grim, dark house of the big, grown-up woman who had fastened the odium of "bad little girl" upon the four-year-old baby.

Perhaps as she slept, this big, grown-up woman enemy of a little child—she dreamed of her own babyhood, before the grind of living had sucked the sweetness from her nature. She may, even, in her dreams, have been a little child, carried in her father's arms, past a house where dwelt a woman who had thought her bad, and gossiped to the neighbors about her. Or mayhap she tossed in her sleep; a troubled sense may have broken her rest, and whispered to her in the night watches, "Shame, shame!"

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When the father of the bad little girl had laid his sleeping burden on the couch, he straightened up—and with his wife's hand clasped in his, looked down upon their sleeping darling. Her long, dark lashes rested on the rose leaf of her cheek, and her silky, dark hair was rumpled. So little she was, and so sweet—a little innocent baby thing, made to be loved and cherished! As they looked, he murmured, "Such a bad little thing!" and by that remark the baby's mother knew the depth of resentment that lay beneath the surface of his feelings.



However it was, whether the big grown-up woman had traveled back the weary milestones that lay between womanhood and babyhood in her dreams the night before, or whether something—a vague dislike of that part of her which had caused her to find fault with her baby neighbor, or what it was—I cannot say. But this I know, before the sun had climbed very high in the heavens the next day, the bad little girl was sitting on her side steps, holding her dollie, when a voice called to her. And there, by the alley fence, was the big grown-up woman, holding in her hand a chunk of fresh gingerbread, and smiling at her through tears. The bad little girl threw the dollie face down upon the grass, as she sped

down the sidewalk. And to her credit may it be said, she spied the smile before she did the gingerbread, and put her soft little arms around her neck, and cried, "You DO love me any more, don't you?"

A Dream of Affluence

A WOMAN there was, who had a Dream. In it she was the possessor of all kinds of servants, high class and low. Her Dream was not of wealth, just of servants. But the inference might safely be drawn that she could count her dollars up into the billions, since only a near-millionaire can afford to keep one nowadays.

In her Dream was no limousine, no automobile, no electric, in fact none of the things which she desired, and which she had promised herself when the tide should have turned, and her Day of Prosperity have approached. Instead, she had Servants.

And she had an entirely new and original assortment of them, besides the ordinary ones that we know of by reading David Graham Phillips, and the other writers of *Society as She is Lived in the East*. There were butlers, and chefs, and footmen, and scullery maids,

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and all of the fifty-seven common varieties of the species.



But listen! There was one factotum bearing the official title of The Finder of Lost Articles. Previously, when school time approached, this Woman of the Dream had to roll the piano from its corner, remove the registers and crawl under the couch in the living room, in a mad scramble to help Willie find his cap, and little Gwendolyn her mittens, or to locate Percy's arithmetic, or Tom's baseball, or Esther's coat.

And then, at the eleventh hour, when there was weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, because tardiness at school was not to be tolerated, and Teacher, who had original and unique methods of punishment, would pull Esther's chin, or tap Willie's nose, the Earth which had opened up and swallowed the things, would disgorge them, on the sideboard among the cut glass, under the table in the kitchen, or behind the refrigerator.

But NOW! In the Dream, she pushed a button, and The Finder of Lost Articles noiselessly appeared, bearing the things in question upon a tray.

Another high-salaried personage was the Overseer of Teeth, Ears and Fingernails. Time was, when Mother had had to personally in-

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spect each tooth, ear and fingernail of her various offspring, to make sure that they should not go forth to proclaim her careless and slovenly, as advertised by her loving children.

And truth to tell, this Woman of Many Duties sometimes neglected the usual breakfast greeting. "Good morning. Have you used your tooth brush? Did you wash your ears? Let me see your fingernails. Go back and try again."

It required moral as well as physical strength to keep her children up to the standard of cleanliness demanded by the conventions of society and the laws of sanitation.

This had been before the Dream. During that Interval of Blessed Surcease, the Overseer of Teeth, Ears and Fingernails did the necessary labor. Muffled sounds from the bathroom sometimes indicated that she earned her salary. Mother devoted the time previously employed in that direction to preparing a paper for her club on "Child Culture. The Child's Best Good."



And there was the Mender of Torn Garments and Sewer-on of Buttons. Remembering her tasks along this line in her Day of Waking Hours, the woman had felt a sense of guilt in not dividing the job into two. But she quieted her conscience by adding to the

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salary of this useful member of the household.

The time previously given over to mending and darning, she now employed in reading "Beauty Hints. My Method of Restoring Lost Youth," by Lillian Russell.



This Woman of the Dream had one personage known as The Caller-in to Meals. He was very high-class, indeed, for he had just as many subs as the woman had children, whose work it was to capture a child and bring him to the table in spite of his screams. Upon the head Professor, yea, even the Caller-in to Meals himself, devolved the labor of getting the Man of the House corraled, and in his proper place at the head of the table, when the meals were ready.

This lot of servants cost a great deal, but the woman felt it was worth it; no longer was it necessary to eat lukewarm meals, nor strain her lungs in a hopeless endeavor to get all the members of her table to the table at one time.



But the Dream had its drawbacks, as well as its uses. Relieved of her tasks, the woman waxed fat, very fat! Having so much idle time on her hands, she read Ibsen and Maeterlinck till she grew mentally lop-sided.

Not having the old-time anxiety at meal time, she enjoyed her meals so much that she

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ate to excess, and then came the superabundance of flesh.

So when the Dream came to an end, and she awakened to the knowledge that with the dawning of the day had vanished the host of servants, she was not half sorry—even though it meant arising and cooking the luscious bacon and the toast for her own.

To the family, life went on much as it had in her Dream, for they still had a Finder of Lost Articles, and Overseer of Teeth, Ears and Fingernails, a Mender of Torn Garments and Sewer-on of Buttons, and a Caller-in to Meals—all combined in the person of—Mother.

My Neighbor

THIS is a composite picture of my neighbor. Some people are so situated that the meaning of neighbor is: one whose back porch is an offense; one whose chickens scratch up one's garden; one whose puppy rolls in one's flower bed, and whose cat yowls under one's window; one whose children track mud on one's front walk; one who throws rubbish over the fence into one's back yard; one who keeps perpetual watch behind drawn blinds, to keep tally on one's goings out and one's coming in.

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But that is not MY NEIGHBOR. My neighbor is never intrusive. When I would be left alone, I am alone. When I am lonely, she comes to me. When I am hungry, she feeds me; when I am weary, she rests me; and when I am athirst, she gives me of the Cup of Friendship—that cup which never becomes empty, no matter how deeply I quaff its contents.



My neighbor reads the books that I have not time to read, and she gives them to me in her own quaint way. My neighbor comes into my house when I feel the need of her. When I want to be talked to, she talks to me, and when I wish to be silent, she, too, is silent. And when my soul is turbulent, she softly plays the piano for me, until the sweetness and harmony to which her fingers give expression find lodgement in my consciousness.

My neighbor is young and gay and pretty. Her merry laughter ripples across the yard, vaults the fence, and penetrates the darkest corner of my house. The presence of my neighbor is the breath of lilies.

My neighbor's hair is gray, and to some her eyes might seem dimmed by the years she has seen. But I see only the young heart of her, and I partake of the joyousness of her ever-youth.

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My neighbor comes to me when she is in trouble, and this I regard as the greatest compliment she can pay me. When trials and burdens press heavily upon me, I go to my neighbor, sure of her ready sympathy and of her understanding heart.

My neighbor tells me how to set the pockets in the littlest one's wee trousers, and she advises me as to the length of the daughter's skirts. My neighbor shares her choicest recipes with me. My neighbor honors me with her confidence. My neighbor comes to me when the sugar gives out, and I go to her when an egg is needed for the cake I am about to bake.

My neighbor knows intuitively when other work is pressing, and the baking being neglected, and when the need is greatest she appears like a ministering angel with a pan of rolls, a loaf of fresh bread, a cake or a pie, or a bowl of apple sauce.



On days that friends have seemed unkind or neglectful; days when one feels keenly the isolation and loneliness that comes sometimes to the happiest woman, if she be a woman who belongs to no "crowd" my neighbor telephones and asks me to take the littlest one and go to a picture show.

My neighbor bolsters up my pride when it

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has been dealt a blow. When I have been made conscious that the gray is becoming noticeable in my hair and that my new "bun-nit" is unbecoming, my neighbor says some nice little thing that makes me perk up and feel good.



At times when my mind becomes weary and overtaxed and refuses utterly to perform its accustomed work; when in despair I cry to myself, "Oh, what's the use?" my neighbor comes, and she tells me that something I have written has helped her over a rough place. And then the morning stars sing together, and my mind leaps to its task, like a race horse to its course, and all is well again.

And when the hour of trial comes, the hour when my soul goes down into the very depths, and lies numbed and dull and stupefied and unhearing, it is my neighbor who follows me down into the darkness, and reaches out for me, and gently, lovingly, tenderly leads me back to the light of day.

Is it any wonder that the name is very dear to me, MY NEIGHBOR?

The Wall a Woman Built

A WOMAN built a high wall around herself, and sat down to gloat over it. And the stones whereof she builded were bigotry, haughtiness, pride of family, smugness of conceit over her achievements, and aloofness from all that she deemed common and ordinary.

For a while she was so absorbed in her wall that she did not miss the companionship of her fellows. Then she began to wonder what had become of her old-time friends and to ask herself if they were missing her.

Later, she grew a trifle piqued because they did not come near her. She wanted them to come and admire her wall, even though they would have to climb over it to reach her, and in the effort would likely be scratched and bruised and wounded.



She waited, and she waited, and the waiting grew irksome. Day after day, week after week, month after month, went by, and no one came to admire her wall and to pass the time o' day with her.

But she told herself that she did not care. But she could not look herself in the eye when she said it, for she knew that she lied. She knew that she did care. She knew that the

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woman heart of her longed for warm, human companionship.

In time the yearning became intense. She no longer wanted her friends to come just to exclaim over the superiority of her wall, and to envy. She just wanted someone to visit with; she wanted to chat about all the little inconsequential things of big consequence; she wanted to gossip, harmlessly; she wanted to exchange recipes, to borrow and lend ideas. She no longer wanted just to give—she wanted to receive.



The months became years, and still she sat behind her wall, and waited. The brown of her hair became silver; the furrows in cheek and brow deepened. The time came when she felt old age creeping upon her, and the waiting grew intolerable.

She determined to climb to the top of her wall and see what was going on in the world. But the years that had silvered her hair had sapped her strength, and she found the feat impossible.

So, with trembling hands she pried loose a few stones from her wall, and peered out at the world.

The people who passed by were all in a hurry. They were like a lot of busy bees; and they had no time to loiter to talk to a poor old

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woman who had isolated herself behind a stone wall.

Even her old friends, when they passed, had small time to talk to her. Of one such she asked the reason, and he said, "Haven't you heard? It is a forward movement that is going on all over the world. There are few idlers left. Everyone is busy—either in solving his own or his brother's problem. You'd better come out and join the procession."

"But I can't," cried the woman; "this wall that I built with such care holds me."

"Oh, that?" and the busy friend smiled contemptuously. "Better tear it down, my friend. It's of no use to you or to anyone else."



And so the woman began to tear down, stone by stone, the wall she had built. It had taken time to build—the stones had been carefully put together with the cement of selfishness, and it could not be torn down in a day.

But the poor, lonely, broken old woman, who had come to see how she had cheated herself, worked at it faithfully, stone by stone, praying always for strength and endurance to complete her work.



The task was finally finished. The last stone fell, and the woman was freed. She stood in brooding silence, watching the busy

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people going by. Some went singing, some praying; a few went cursing; some laughed as they passed along, and others wept; some had the sprightliness of youth in their steps, some the faltering of age.

At first it seemed to the watcher that she had lost her place; that the years she had sat alone had unfitted her for the march. At the thought, the tears of humility filled her eyes.

Then, as her vision cleared, she saw others stumbling along in uncertainty, and she thought, "Perhaps if I, too, join in the march, I can help someone who is weaker than I."

So, at last, she stood in the light; she raised her eyes to the everlasting hills. Her lips moved silently in thanksgiving, and then, old, and bent, and broken though she was, she took her place in the procession.

The Man Who Wanted to Help

THE man who wanted to help piled a lot of dishes, glassware, china, crockery, tinware, silver, and granite into a huge dishpan, poured some lukewarm water over them, and plunged in up to his elbows, with an expression of grim determination on his face.

The woman who was willing to be helped



"The Man Who Wanted to Help"

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took one look and fled. Long experience with the man who wanted to help had taught her that if he was going to help it must be in the way of his own appointing, not hers.

And long experience with the old-maid part of her—not the woman who was willing to be helped part, but the part that had a certain system and thought it the only system, told her she would shriek, if compelled to remain in the kitchen with the man who wanted to help, with his haphazard method of accomplishing things.

So the woman who was willing to be helped gently led the other part of her into the living room, and let her begin straightening the books and magazines in her own prim little fashion.



The man who wanted to help threw the dish water out over the back steps and walk, tossed the damp dish-towel over the back of a convenient chair, and went into the other part of the house to see what further assistance he could render.

When he saw that the woman who was willing to be helped was trying to restore order out of chaos, he shoved her out. "You go do something else. I'll do this room."

The other part of her started to rebel, as she saw him going hit or miss at things, and she

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bit her lips to keep from saying, "That's not the way to do it." But the woman who was willing to be helped whispered to her, "Come upstairs and make the beds."



After he had finished the living room, which he did in an incredibly short space of time, the man who wanted to help followed the woman who was willing to be helped, upstairs, and took away her task, that of making the beds, saying: "Go down stairs and read the paper. Cultivate your mind by reading Jaura Lean Jibbey, and your body by reading Rillian Lussell. If you think you're too fat, roll on the floor, or do whatever else she tells you to do. Only, STOP WORKING! I'm having my vacation now, and you're having yours, and I want you to enjoy it."

The other part of the woman started to protest, but she was taken gently by the shoulder, and helped toward the stairs. When she saw the living room, she gasped. A collar belonging to the man who wanted to help lovingly encircled a vase on the piano. One of his shoes was on the couch, and his cravat was reposing on the rug. His hat decorated the top of the table, and a coat hung over the door of the closet, which stood wide open, revealing several empty hooks, and a hat rack.

But he had straightened up the table. All

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of the magazines had been neatly tied and left on the floor, ready for the furnace; the books had been laid side by side in even rows upon the top of the table. The waste basket bulged with its contents, there were scraps of paper on the floor, and dust lay thick upon bookcase and chairs.



The woman who was willing to be helped led the other part of her away—through the dining room, with the crumbs still on the table, into the kitchen, bestrewn with the dishes that had been washed by the man who wanted to help—and the floor unswept!

The other part of her sat down in a state of utter despair, but the woman who was willing to be helped said, with rare philosophy, "Bless his dear heart, don't let him know that you don't like his method. Wait until he goes down town, which he probably will, to read the baseball score, and then we will clean up after him."

In a few minutes the man who wanted to help came down the stairs, calling cheerily, "Well, my work's all done—fine as a top. I say, you women folks that just have housework to do, have a snap. Why, I haven't been at it an hour, and the work's all done. Say, have you seen my collar? And where's my hat? I'm going down to read the baseball

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score, and maybe look in at the office just to gloat over the fellows that have already had their vacations, and are back digging. Now you just loaf and read and have a good time till I get back."



Dear, thoughtful man who wanted to help—happy in the belief that he had made the day easier for the woman who was willing to be helped.

And so he had. For there was a smile on her lips that even the other part of her—the silly, precise part—was unable to quench, as she flew around with dust-cloth and mop, doing the work according to her own method.

A Tribute

IN a distant city, in a large, hospitable old southern-style House of Pleasant Memories, lies a woman today, her wrinkled hands folded across her quiet breast, her beautiful eyes closed to the grief about her for the first time in over seventy years. I would like to say a few words about her, though my heart is heavy and sad. Her life is one of the most beautiful lessons taught by example. She was one of those rare souls who spoke love always.

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If in her heart she could find no good to speak—and I doubt if any person ever crossed her path that she did not divine some good in him—at least she would speak no evil. In her youth she must have been good looking, with the features, the coloring and the figure of beauty. In her mature years she was beautiful, from the character-building which had gone on through all the years, giving to her eyes the depth of unspeakable tenderness which drew people to her wherever she went.



She led so quiet and simple a life that it might have been supposed that her influence would have been restricted to her family, and her small circle of acquaintances. But such was not the case. A charity as sweet and broad as hers, a love as expansive, found its way out into the world, and in all the city where she made her home no name, perhaps, was spoken which brought the whispered blessings, from high and low, from rich and poor, as did hers.

She was not a fashionable woman. But one never noticed her clothes. There was a majesty in her bearing, a benevolence in her glance that made mere clothes seem trivial and commonplace. There was true aristocracy in her every movement, which made people know that the bluest blood in the nation flowed in

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her veins. Yet there was not a creature so illiterate and plebian in the whole community who would not go to her in trouble.

She did not go abroad to dispense charity. She did not need so to do. Those in need of charity came to her doorstep, certain of her sweet understanding and help.



She was not a society woman, though she could have been had she so desired, for none in the town bore a prouder name. But she had no time for society. She never played a game of bridge in her life. Golf was to her a name. She had never learned to dance. Yet there was not a society woman in the town but would stop her busy round of pleasure-going for a chance to talk with her.

She was not a rich woman, as the world counts riches. Yet of her abundance she gave unstintedly, and none who partook of her wealth, so lavishly given, ever forgot the gift, or the giver.



Once, when she was quite a young woman, with her brood of little children about her, two young girls who had been driven from the place they called home, by the police, came to her door. It was late in the evening, and it was storming. Her own life was so pure and white that had she been the average church

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member, she would have shut the door upon them, and turned them back upon the Broad Road they had trod.

Even there the story of her sweetness and her charity had penetrated. And these girls, with no friends in all the city—girls who had mothers breaking their hearts for them at home—went to the only haven they could be sure of—went with the story of shame upon their lips. And she took them in—this lovely, brave woman. She housed them, she sheltered them, and she did more than that, for the poor wayward things.

She did not give them charity, as might some have done, handing it to them with tongs, to escape contamination. She knew that she could not be contaminated by any act of love. After keeping them over night, and giving them material food—she gave them more. She talked to them as tenderly as a mother might have talked. She did not withhold love—she gave it freely.

The result was that two penitent, sorrowing young girls turned their faces toward home, where two mothers were watching and waiting and praying.

And the good angel who had sent them to the one human source of help in all that city must have wept tears of joy. For is it not said that there is more rejoicing over the one

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that returns to the fold than over the ninety and nine who have remained within the sheltering arms of the Shepherd?

The woman who had brought about this consummation—whose loving charity had returned them to the fold—went on her way serenely, without one self-righteous thought to mar her perfect work.



Her story is ended. There are tears today in her death chamber. There are sorrowing hearts to whom the whole world seems empty—with her away. In the city where for more than half a century she has modestly lived, unmindful of the wonderful influence wrought by her love and charity and purity, there is grief and sorrow. People are telling each other in choking voices of how she will be missed, of how the very thought that she is no longer in the old house which her presence has endeared to so many, will cause poignant pain.

They are covering the casket which contains the dear body, with flowers. They are sobbingly looking for the last time upon the beautiful, blessed face which never was marred by unlovely lines of age or of bitterness. They are wondering why the sun shines, or the roses bloom, or the birds sing—since she is gone.

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And yet, what cause for rejoicing is theirs—though they know it not! Had she taken with her into that fuller life into which she has entered, any lurking hatred or malice; any memory of injustice done anyone, or of selfishness—it would be different. But she has taken what she has given, no more, no less. And she gave—love; and they must know, if they believe anything—and who is there who in his heart can doubt?—that she is bathed in the ineffable sunshine of love—with only themselves groping in the darkness, on this side of the curtain which has veiled her from them.

And some day the curtain will lift, and they will see, even as they are seen, and know, even as they are known.

Teacher

TEACHER was going home with him to dinner! It was a big day for the small boy, about the most important day of all the days of his seven years. His heart was like down in his bosom, and he was as chesty as a pouter pigeon, on this day.

The little girls who went his way swarmed around Teacher like bees around a rose. One

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of the Clinging Vines among them hung onto her hand on the other side. Pooh! Teacher wasn't going home to dinner with that little girl with her hippety-hop and her skippety-skip! She might make eyes as big as saucers at Teacher, but it would not do her any good.

Teacher could not be deflected by any such tricks. For Teacher was going home to dinner with HIM!

'Course he didn't hold her hand. He just walked beside her. He had a right, on this day of days, to walk beside her. Folks might think she was going home to dinner with that girl who was hanging onto her on the other side, but she wasn't. She was going home with him.



Mother had given him a note to take to Teacher the day before, and had told him she was inviting Teacher to take dinner with them the next day. And Teacher had given him a note to take to Mother in reply. It was written on a little piece of note paper, folded in a triangle, and written on the outside, in Teacher's most precise handwriting was, "Mrs. Smith. Kindness of William."

Kindness of William! Gee, that looked SOME like he was a big boy! He'd lick any boy that called him Willie after this!

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And now she was walking home with him. One by one the little girls dropped off as they reached their own corners. Finally even the Clinging Vine on the other side reluctantly abandoned them, when she came to the cross-roads that led to her own home.

He had never been glad before that he lived farther'n the other children. At first a constraint seized the small man; a spasm of embarrassment such as occasionally attacks the most seasoned entertainer, when he finds the burden of conversation resting upon him.

But pshaw, it wasn't hard to talk to Teacher! Always before she had been a sort of goddess. But now, she seemed like—well, just folks. For she was going home with him to dinner.



She believed in fairies, too. That was wonderful! She sometimes heard them whispering secrets to her, when she kept just as still! They told her when the Spring was coming, long before anybody else knew it. Sometimes, when it seemed like there was nothing but winter anywhere, the Fairies would whisper, "Close your eyes so you can't see that the ground is frozen. Pull your wraps around you so you can't feel the cold. Shut your ears so you can't hear the wind whistling through the bare branches."

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And what do you think? Teacher, she'd do what the fairies told her to do, and she'd smell the violets and johnny-jump-ups. And it wouldn't be cold anymore, 'cause she'd know that the spring sunshine was all around her. And the wind wasn't wind at all, but just spring breezes. It was wonderful!



And sometimes, Teacher said, when she thought that friends were cold, like the winter, and when she believed that there were such things as enemies in the world, just like little children believed there were such things as bad fairies, she'd hear the good fairies whispering to her, "Close the door of your heart on that winter draught: shut your eyes on that thought of evil," and guess what would happen!

You could never guess, but Teacher'd tell you. Teacher would find that her friends were not cold at all, like the winter. She had just thought they were, because she hadn't been letting the good fairies talk to her.

And she would find that the only enemies she had were the bad thoughts she had let into her heart. And the bad thoughts were the bad fairies.

And so, after she found that out, Teacher would just slam the door in their faces, whenever they poked their meddlesome little noses

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into her business. She wasn't even polite to those bad fairies. Teacher wasn't.

She tried awful hard to be polite and nice to the good fairies. She said "Yes'm," and "No, sir," and "if you please," and "Thank you," to the good fairies, because they were so nice to her, and she wanted to be nice to them, so they would come again.

But she didn't waste any time being polite to those bad fairies, "'cause she didn't want their company, Teacher, she didn't."

Mother had told the little lad something about fairies. But she had said that it was only women folks that believed in fairies any more. Boys might believe in them but she was afraid that when they went out into the world, they saw so many things that were different that they forgot all about the stories their mothers had told them when they were small.

Mother had said that once when Father had laughed at something, and said it was a fairy story and too good to be true. Mother had said, with a kind o' sad look in her eyes, "Oh, let him keep his illusions as long as he can!"

He didn't know what illusions were, but anyway, he wanted to keep them, if Mother wanted him to. And if it had anything to do with fairies, he was going to keep them, 'specially after what Teacher had told him about them!

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It's funny what a short walk it is to one's home—when Teacher goes home to dinner! But it is nice to see Mother smiling a welcome on the front porch. And it's fine to see the baby toddling on the grass, all so sweet and clean and dainty.

And it makes a little boy happy to hear Teacher and Mother talking together at the dinner table, even if he can't always understand what it's about.

Gee, it's fine, when Teacher comes home to dinner!

A House Cleaning

YOU have been cleaning house this week. The rhythmic beat, beat, beat on the carpets has betrayed the fact. The Mender of Worn Furniture has carted off half your chairs to repair the damage done during the past season. The winter clothes and the bedding are airing on the line, and the front porch is filled up with books and bric-a-brac and tables and all kinds of folderols.

As you have gone in and out among your possessions, with your head tied up in a towel, and a wet rag in your hand with which you have made a swipe at everything in sight, you

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have sighed over the utter foolishness of material acquisitiveness.

You have promised yourself that some day you would give away or destroy all superfluous furnishings, and eliminate the slavery which their possession entails.



You have said the same thing each spring in the years of your responsibility. And then, what have you done?

You have finally reached the attic in your peregrinations, with the grim determination to clear it of everything not absolutely essential to your housekeeping.

You have sat down on the floor beside an old trunk, and from its depths you have hauled an old, sheer, big sleeved, unfashionable dress. Nothing about it is useful. It would probably go to pieces if you tried to rip it up. The little daughter would turn up her nose at it, so if you had any idea of utilizing it for her, you might as well abandon the notion.

Yet,—you do not cast it into the scrap heap. You tenderly and reverently fold it, and put it back into the trunk. It is not the flimsy, funny looking old gown you are preserving. It is what the gown represents—YOUTH, with its glorious promises, its hopes, its splendid possibilities!

You wore that gown to your first really-

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truly grown-up party! You wore a rose in your hair, and twin roses in your cheeks. Your eyes were aglow with the light of expectation.

“Enough was the joy of mere living,
Enough was the blood’s quick thrill!
You were simply happy, you knew not why,
You were happy beyond your will.”



It was such a PERFECT evening! Life has held many pleasures for you since, and much of real happiness, without the froth of the earlier days, but that one evening stands out from all the others; it is unique, for it marked your emergence into the period of your grown-up-ness.

And that is why you keep the old gown. And that is why you will still have the memory of that perfect evening, long after the fabric of the dress has fallen into shreds.

And here you sit and pore over the contents of an old box which you have pulled from the darkest recess of the attic. The letters and papers contained therein are yellowed by age and covered with dust. You have told yourself that THIS time you would destroy these old things that simply clutter up the house.

But you will keep this letter. It is one that Father wrote you when you were off at boarding school. In it, he expressed his faith in

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you, and in your future. You cannot see to read it well. The light is very bad in this corner. That—or something—makes it seem blurred to your vision. But you know what it says. The letter is not long, and each word is written in your heart. You do not need to keep it—but you carefully lay it with the pile of treasures to be retained.

There is another one which you do not attempt to read. It is from your mother, and you do not feel that your strength is sufficient, even now, for you to read the dear handwriting.

This brief one, in the boyish hand, from the little brother so long lost—you read it with a tenderly reminiscent look in your eyes. It was written you once when you were away from home on a visit, and you recall that this letter hastened your return, because he said that the old dog looked lonesome and didn't seem to enjoy his meals while you were gone.

Down in one corner of the box you find an envelope containing a date and a few dried flowers. There are other envelopes, also containing flowers, each with a different date.

You smile as you realize that the flowers and the dates are alike meaningless to you; that they have had no real influence upon your life. But because you know that at one time they were important to you; because you

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know that they belonged to that period of your young ladyhood, they, too, are carefully replaced.

Finally you kneel beside a small chest and open it. There is a light in your eyes which was not there on that one perfect evening; a light which all the centuries of time cannot obliterate.

Here is a tiny dress, into which your fingers wrought the highest hopes and aspirations that ever come to a woman. It was made for your first born. And here is a wee shoe, and there a quaint little sacque. Tenderly you view your treasures, smooth out the creases and brush off the dust which has accrued to them.

Each one sings a song to your answering heart—a lullaby.

The sun declines, and twilight sadness steals over the attic, yet still you sit with your treasures around you. The wearers of the tiny garments are scattered,—yet all that made your motherhood remains. Nothing can rob you of the sweetness and the deep happiness that it has given you.



With the sigh of personal renunciation that every mother sooner or later experiences, you have carefully replaced the treasures in the little trunk.

You turn at the door of the attic to survey

the extent of the promised clearing out of rubbish; and, if you have a saving sense of humor, you smile at your weakness,—smile all the more courageously, because there is a lump in your throat.

The Woman Who Dreamed

A WOMAN there was who sat and looked into the glowing embers of a log fire and dreamed dreams. She dreamed of the great achievements which should be hers, of the songs she would sing, the books she would write, the pictures she would paint.

And as she dreamed, the logs fell apart—the glow diminished, and there remained but the ashes of what had once been warmth and cheer. Still the woman sat and strove to warm herself by what had been a fire.

The world passed on. There had been times when her fire had burned the brightest, that folks had stopped for a moment to warm themselves, and to partake of the cheer. But the energy within had called, and they had leaped to the call. They had passed on and she had remained to dream.

They came and went, but they tarried not. A restless, surging throng, were they, with



"The Woman Who Dreamed"

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the inspiration to do, tugging incessantly at the strings of their being.



Some there had been, who had found the companionship of the dreamer soothing, and so had lingered, till the chill of the dying fire had penetrated their consciousness, and they had roused themselves and gone the way of the others, out into the busy marts where people were striving for glory, for fame, for wealth, for life itself.



And the dreamer dreamed on. Once, when her fire was burning with a steady flame,—when it and dissolution seemed so very far apart, that they were not associated in the mind of anyone, folks had watched the dreamer and said, “She is going to do something. We shall hear from her some day.”

One generation gave way to another generation, and the woman dreamed on. The people hurried by now, each one intent on his own mission, with seldom a glance at the dreaming woman.

Sometimes, out of the dreary cheerlessness of the Never Has Been, would step a derelict, to whom even the dying ashes of What Had Been, offered some solace, and he would tarry.

But not for long. For to each one who had eyes to see and a heart to understand, was

given a glimpse of—What Might Be, by Doing,—and the derelict would pass on, with his face toward the goal that had lured them, one by one, away from the fire which was bound to go out.



And so the woman sat alone by her dead fire and dreamed of the things she had never done. She had visions of the work she had never accomplished.

While out in the world beyond, where had gone her companions, others were winning and wearing the laurels they had worked for, had fought, bled and almost died for.

The time came, as was inevitable, when she ceased even to dream. The chill of the dead ashes enveloped her, body and soul,—she was benumbed,—she no longer dreamed,—she no longer WAS! All of her bright, beautiful dreams had left her, and she had,—nothing.

There is not much more to be said, only this,—dreams, when put into action, bring happiness, success and the realization of achievement. Dreams which lie dormant, become, like the fire the woman had kindled,—the dead ashes of hope, the grave of endeavor,—they do not warm, they do not inspire, and they finally paralyze effort and produce the mental lethargy which precedes oblivion.





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